

MARICULTURE UNLIMITED

Permit Application 200202751

FACT SHEET

Date: March 18, 2003

Project Activity and Specifications: The installation of submerged longlines throughout a 522.3 acre area. The areas proposed to receive gear includes two state lease sites off of Cockenoe Island in Westport, CT, Lease 602 and state Lease 612, and lease site No. 390 off of Milford, CT. The applicant proposes a maximum of 56 submerged longlines at Lease 390 and a maximum of 169 longlines at the combined lease site 602/612 off of Westport. The placement of gear at the two lease sites off of Westport, described as Shellfish Concentration Area No. 1 (SCA 1), is proposed to encompass 366.8 acres. The shellfish concentration area for this site encompasses the entire 155.5-acre portion of lease 390. It is anticipated that at full growth the entire operation will have the capacity of 15,750,000 market-sized oysters.

Site 1a/1b - Westport CT - The 366.8-acre rearing area at Lease 602 and 612 is located to the northeast of Cockenoe Reef, southeast of the Saugatuck River entrance, and north of Georges Rock in 24 to 32 feet of water at an orientation of 317°. At this site, approximately one hundred sixty-nine 325 foot long longlines, each suspending 50 cage units (4.6' high modules) for the rearing of oysters, is proposed to be submerged 10 feet below the water surface, kept afloat between large flotation buoys and anchored by 4 terminal helix-style anchors and 6 intermediately placed 200 pound mushroom anchors. Compensation buoys will be used to keep the longline off of the bottom. Tidal currents at the site run 272 ° on a flood tide, and 84° on an ebb tide. Predicted maximum current velocities for the site are 1.2 knot on a flood tide, and 1.88 knot on an ebb tide.

Site 2 - Milford CT - The 155.5 acre rearing area at Lease 390 is located offshore of Cedar Beach and Laurel Beach in water depths of between 15 and 22 feet at an orientation of 205°. At this lease, approximately fifty-six 325 foot long longlines, each suspending 50 cage units (4.6' high modules) for the rearing of oysters, is proposed to be submerged 8 feet below the water surface, kept afloat between large flotation buoys and anchored by 4 terminal helix-style anchors and 6 intermediately placed 200 pound mushroom anchors. Compensation buoys will be used to keep the longline off of the bottom. Tidal currents at the site run 250 ° on a flood tide, and 70° on an ebb tide. Predicted maximum current velocities for the site are 0.8 knot on a flood tide, and 1.1 knot on an ebb tide.

Background: An application for the proposed activity was received on October 29, 2002. The proposal originally described the installation of 20 500' long longlines with 30 suspended cages per longline at three state shellfish lease locations (L-390, L-569, L-602). The Corps met with the applicant on December 10, 2002 to discuss deficiencies in the application and identified additional information the Corps needed to continue processing the application. On January 8, 2003 the Corps received an amended application. This application included the elimination of proposed gear at lease site No. 569, acquisition of additional lease adjacent to lease site No. 602 (Lease No. 612), and an increase in the number of long lines from 20 to 225. The significant increase in the number of submerged longlines and hence gear density at the lease sites significantly increases the potential for interference with existing uses of the waterway, specifically recreation, commercial fisheries, and navigation. The amended application describes the installation of submerged longlines throughout a 522.3 acre area. For this reason it was determined that the aquaculture project would be evaluated as an Individual Permit.

Issues: The application identifies two popular recreational fishing areas in the vicinity of the Westport leases, one in the shallow rocky area around Georges Rock and one on the northern boundary line of lease 602. Both of these areas have been avoided. A commercial lobsterman runs gear on the northern part of lease 612 in the winter months. The site was sited to avoid conflict and the applicant is willing to discuss a use agreement with the affected fisherman. There is no known recreational or commercial fishing activity in the vicinity of the Milford site, and it does not appear to normally support a large amount of recreational boat activity. However, the Westport leases are located in the middle of the demarcated navigable approach to the Saugatuck River, a very popular recreational boating harbor and also the site of annual sailboat races associated with the nationally recognized Cedar Point Yacht Club

Current Status and Schedule: The Public Notice opened on March 13, 2003 and will close on April 17, 2003. 120-days will expire on July 17, 2003.

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Staffing: PM _____ CMR _____ SEC CHF _____ CH REG BR _____